A Trip to Gold Fields of the Klondike by Railroad

FRANK G. CARPENTER Tells How the Rails Were Laid Over Mountains—The First Train Carried $2,000,000 in Gold Dust—Stories of the Construction—Up the Coast Range—Dead Horse Canyon—Mules That Committed Suicide—Tales of the Early Miners—International Boundary and Headwaters of the Yukon—The Usual Tourist Trip in Alaska.

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WHITE HORSE, Yukon Territory.

I HAVE just taken a trip over the first railway line ever built in Alaska. This is "the White Pass" that runs from Skagway over the coast range to White Horse, at the headwaters of the Yukon. The road was built when the Klondike gold excitement was at its height. It was to carry passengers over the mountains to where they could get ship for Dawson. The work was begun in 1898, and finished less than two years later when the first passenger train, a line of flat cars, brought out gold dust to the amount of $2,000,000.

The White Pass railway is only 111 miles long and although not as expensive as the Copper river road, belonging to the Guggenheims, it cost millions to build. The first twenty miles cost on the average more than $100,000 per mile, and there are parts of the track which cost half as much more. During the construction 3,500 men were employed, and less than thirty of these died or were killed while the railroad was building. The work went on right through the winter; and within eighteen months after the first pick was used the trains were carrying thousands of passengers and millions of dollars' worth of freight down the sea coast.

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The White Pass railway begins at Skagway, the port at the head of the Lynn canal, just about 1,000 miles from Seattle. Its path is cut through the rocks along the winding valley of the Skagway river and up the steep slope of the Coast range of mountains. Here and there the track hangs to the sides of cliffs so steep that the workmen had to be hung in slings from above that they might drill and blast out the ledges on which the road runs. In places whole cliffs were thrown down to make a place for the roadbed.

After reaching the top of the pass the track runs for twenty-seven miles along the winding shores of Lake Bennett. It crosses a canyon 215 feet high upon a great bridge of steel. It skirts the White Horse rapids, so famous in the days of the Klondike, and finally ends at White Horse, 350 miles from Dawson by the Overland trail and more than 100 miles more by the river.

The usual tourist trip of Alaska is confined to the islands of the southeastern part of the territory. It ends at Skagway and many travelers make the excursion to the summit of the White Pass and return during the stay of the steamer. So far very few have gone on into Dawson, and those who make the long trip down the Yukon to Nome are fewer still. The round trip fare to the summit of the White Pass is $500; and it costs about $130 for the passage down the Yukon to Nome, where steamers may be had which will take one across Bering sea and the Pacific down to Seattle. The White Pass railway controls the rail and river transportation all the way from Skagway to Nome.

The road was well planned and well built. It has been well managed from the start, and notwithstanding the heavy snowfalls, it has, for the most of the time, been kept open throughout the winter. It has rotary snow plows attached to the engines which will cut a path twelve feet deep through the drifts, and its administration is such that all slides are quickly repaired.

The accidents that occurred during the building of the road were few. At one place an engine jumped over the cliffs, but the men raised it with block and tackle, and it is still doing its work. At another place now marked by an iron cross perhaps two feet in height a rock weighing more than 100 tons fell from the side of the mountain and crushed two workmen who were blasting the way for the track. The rock was so heavy that it could not be moved, and the monument has been sunk in its center.

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The builder of the road was Michael J. Heney, who afterward constructed the Copper River railway for the Guggenheim syndicate. Heney was an expert engineer and a master in the handling of men. He had an iron nerve and would not allow liquor or gambling inside his camp. At one time a desperado belonging to Soapy Smith's gang set up a gambling saloon in a tent close to the route. When Heney ordered him to go away he refused. Heney then turned to his camp foreman, and, pointing to a rock half as big as a house that hung over the tent of the saloonist, told him in the hearing of the gambler to blast that rock out of the way by 5 o'clock the next morning. The gambler thought that this was only a bluff to make him move and he did nothing. That night he slept in the tent. At five minutes to 5 o'clock the next morning the foreman came and told him he must get up and leave or he would be killed by the rock. The gambler replied that the foreman might go to Hades, whereupon the latter said:

"I am too busy to go there this morning, but if you are not out of this tent within two minutes by this watch, you will find yourself there. I shall order my men to touch off the time fuse within sixty seconds. The fuse will burn one minute only when that rock will rise and crush you to death in this tent."

The foreman then ordered "fire" and sought the shelter of a rock. Ten seconds later the gambler rushed after him with his shirt flapping against his bare legs. He continued to go and when last seen was on the dead run down the trail, cursing the road at every step.

But come with me and take a ride over this, the first railroad of Alaska. The cars are comfortable and we shall have moving pictures of magnificent scenery all the way up the mountains. We shoot out of Skagway into a canyon through which a rushing glacial river flows. We skirt this for a mile before climbing the hills and pass on the way some log cabins which the old-timers tell us belonged to a town nicknamed Liarsville, because no one who lived there could tell the truth. A little beyond we can see where the river breaks through the rocks and further up the mountains we find it tumbling down over the rocks, splashing like the falls of Ladore.

Great beds of red flowers line the railway, and these are to be found all the way to the top. Now and then a bed of such flowers covers the hillside. There are trees on the lowland, and everywhere the vegetation is green. Passing onward, the road climbs up the sides of the cliffs. It winds about in horseshoe curves, and its steepness is such that it climbs 2,900 feet before reaching the top. This is 400 feet more than will be the highest altitude on the new road to Fairbanks. The White Pass makes its great climb within twenty miles, and it has only one tunnel along its whole route.

As you go up the mountains the climate rapidly changes. You have a half dozen climates within twenty miles. Now and then you get a breeze from a glacier, and as Jack Frost travels on the wings of the wind over the perpetual ice, his breath sends a chill to your bones. This is perceptible as you cross the canyon and catch the cold air of the Muir glacier not far away. This whole region was once a great glacial garden. You can see glaciers in Skagway, and there are glaciers here and there on the sides of the mountains along the railroad. I saw one with a thread of silver falling down the green slope below it. A little lower the thread had swelled to a rope. Lower still it had become a great cable, and it ended in the foaming Skagway river, dashing down over the rocks to the sea.

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Passing over the mountins of the Coast range, you come into a new country as far as the character of the air is concerned. Skagway is as moist as Puget sound, while White Horse is as dry as Denver. In southeastern Alaska it rains almost every day, and the soil is like a wet sponge. Once over the pass you are in a region which has not had a bit of rainfall for months. The country is as dry as a bone, and in midsummer as hot as the Sahara. There are frequent forest fires. As we climbed to the top of the pass we saw thousands of acres ablaze on the sides of the mountains.

There is plenty of soil on the northern slope of the range, and at first sight the country would seem to be excellent for farming. I am told that it is not. The soil is sand on a bed of gravel and the rain sinks through and is lost. Farther north the soil changes, but the air grows dryer, and the climate is like that of our Rocky mountain plateau. In fact, Alaska is a world as to climate, and in speaking of it it is impossible to compare it with any one region. The conditions of rainfall, temperature and soil vary in the different sections. There are parts of Alaska as warm as Tennessee and Kentucky. There are parts where the rain pours almost every day, and there are other parts, such as the far north, where the rainfall is only two or three inches per year. At Skagway the thermometer seldom falls to zero. Here at White Horse, 100 miles away, it now and then drops to 70 below, and 40 to 50 degrees below zero are to be had every winter.

In traveling from Skagway to the tops of the mountains the vegetation shows the changes of the climate according to altitude. We start in a country covered with jungle. The trees are spruce and pines of various varieties. Some of them are as big around as a flour barrel and as tall as a four-story house. As we ascend they grow smaller and smaller and shorter and shorter, until at last they range in height from that of one's waist to his shoulder. Higher still they become mere shrubs that crawl on the ground. And still they are perfect trees, although they have been flattened by the snow that lies on them during the greater part of the winter. At a little distance they look like a carpet of green on the sides of the hills. Close to the track they make you think of the dwarfed pines of Japan, which may be centuries old, although less than two feet in height.

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All the way up the mountains you can see the remains of the trail which the gold hunters climbed before the iron track was constructed. They made their way through the ice and snow, and many died before they reached the top of the pass. One part of the trail is known as the Dead Horse canyon. It was so named for the dead horses that gave up their equine ghosts at that point. They started out loaded, but were unable to bear the toil of the journey. The year before the road was built more than 5,000 dead horses were counted on the trail. Some had lost their footing and been dashed to death on the rocks below. Others had sunk under their burdens in utter exhaustion and had to be thrown over the rocks, while still others lost heart and actually committed suicide by throwing themselves over the cliffs. One miner driving a mule team got the animals at last to the top, when the leader jumped over the precipice, dragging the other animals with him. All were killed as they fell on the rocks in the valley below. The leader had been twice over the trail.

Not far from Dead Horse canyon, and along it, are the remains of the old road built by George A. Brackett, before the steam road was constructed. Brackett came from Minneapolis to Skagway and built a tollroad up the mountains. He had tollgates here and there, and the charges ranged from 50 cents each for foot passengers to $2 for a four-horse team. The White Pass railway put him out of business, and it is said that he then sold out his route for $40,000 in cash.

During the winter of 1897 33,000 men and women came up the mountains over the trails on their way to Dawson. Most of them carried packs on their backs, some making numerous trips, during which they took from fifty to one hundred pounds at a time. Some had sleds, which they pulled up the mountains, a single sled carrying perhaps two hundred pounds. The average outfit of the Klondiker was about one ton, or two thousand pounds, and the cost of getting this over the trail was enormous. Mules and horses were used, Indians were hired to aid in packing the outfits, and the charge by them was 7 cents and upward per pound. On the Dyea trail the Indians got 10 or 15 cents a pound for taking an outfit fifty miles. The Indians went in families. A man would pack from one hundred to one hundred and forty pounds, a squaw from eighty to one hundred pounds and girls and boys from twenty-five to fifty pounds apiece. Some of the white men went into packing and teaming as a business. One man is said to have made $300,000 by transporting the baggage and supplies of the goldseekers. Another threw a log across a stream and charged 50 cents toll for the use of his bridge.

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During my trip over the White Pass road I had as a seatmate Elmer J. White, who was long our American consul at White Horse, and who has been in this country since the gold rush. His stories of the queer sights on the trail are interesting. Said he:

"The men carried goods of every description. I remember one prospector who packed a grindstone up the hills on his back. Every one wondered what he was going to do with it. He brought it to White Horse and finally to Dawson. There he had a carpenter make him a frame for the stone. When this was completed he let the miners sharpen their axes and picks at 25 cents apiece. They did the work while he sat back and took in a dollar or more an hour for the rent of the grindstone.

"Another man was loaded with window panes. He had sheets of glass seven by nine inches in size. When he got to Dawson he sold them for $2 a pane. Glass was so scarce at that time that beer bottles brought a price as window lights for log cabins. They were piled up lengthwise or set endwise into the windows, being chinked round with mud."

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Some of Mr. White's stories related to the towns along the line. There were settlements of log huts and cities of tents. The town of White Pass contained thousands of tents, occupied by men and women waiting for rafts and boats to be completed to carry them down through the lakes and by way of the river to Dawson. In the spring of 1898 there were 20,000 persons camped at the head of Lake Bennett at the time of the breaking of the ice, and on the shores of the lake you can still see the remains of Mike King's sawmill, which cut lumber at the rate of $80 per thousand and upward for the making of boats to go over the lake.

"All of these settlements," continued Mr. White, "had their saloons and dance halls and games of chance of one kind or another. The men were crazy for amusement and did all sorts of strange things. I remember one night coming into a saloon at White Pass where a dozen miners stood around the bar gambling for drinks. The goddess of fortune was the wee insect that Bobby Burns immortalized in one of his poems when he saw it creeping on a young lady's bonnet. This kind of "wee beastie" was very common in those days and the miners had no trouble in finding one for their sport. The insect was placed on the bar and the gamblers laid their right hands about it at equal distances away. Then they waited to see upon whose hand the beastie would crawl first. That unfortunate man paid for the drinks."

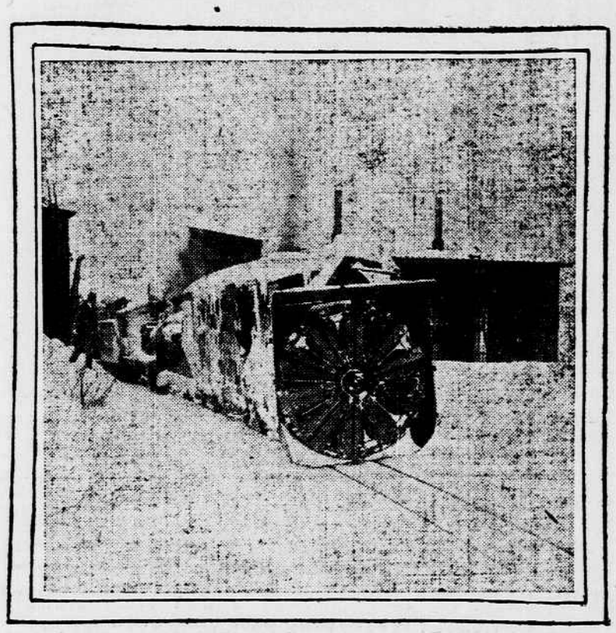
As the crow flies the distance from Skagway to the summit of the White Pass is only fourteen miles, but the railroad track is six miles longer in order to get grades by which the cars could be dragged up the mountains. Our train stopped on the crest of the pass, where the waters flowing into the two oceans divide, and where side by side float the flags of America and Canada. Here, within a few feet of each other, are two streams. One flows toward the west, through United States territory, and after a course of twenty odd miles is lost in the Pacific at Skagway. The other winds its way on down into the Yukon, and it has over 2,000 miles of travel before it reaches Bering sea. I threw a couple of chips into the streams. One has long since been lost in the Pacific ocean, and I am in hopes that the other will in time reach the same body of water not far from the Arctic.

Our international boundary is along the crest of the mountains. We have a strip of country in southeastern Alaska which comprises the Alexander archipelago and all of the mainland thirty miles back from the seacoast or to the crest of the range which borders it. This coastal strip extends from the White Pass to the Portland canal at the south and along the range at the north as far as Mount St. Elias, from where there is a straight line between the two countries, northward to the Arctic ocean.

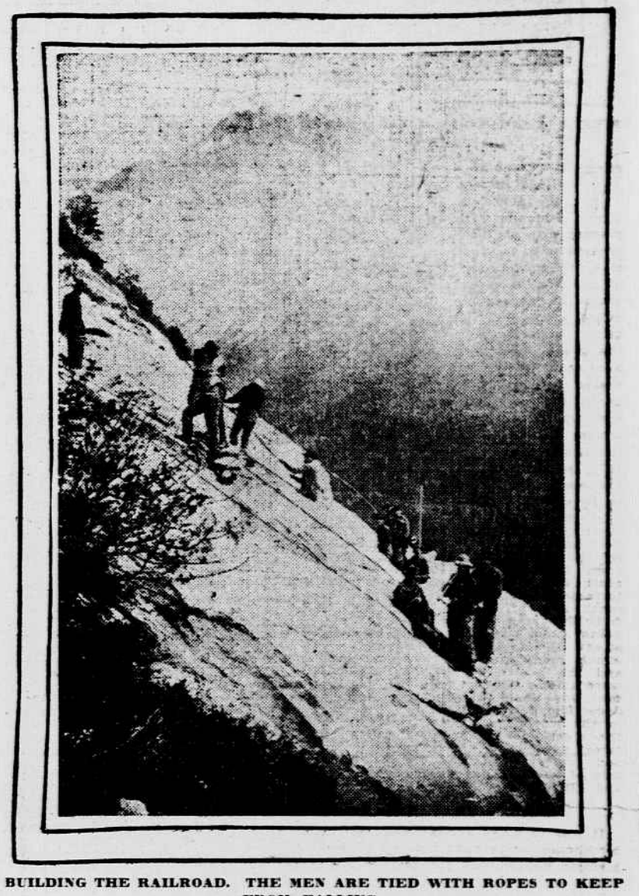
The Yukon, which has its headwaters in the lakes back of Skagway, flows through Canadian territory for a winding distance almost as great as from Chicago to New Orleans before it crosses the international boundary near the village of Eagle. About twenty miles of the White Pass railway is in United States territory, and in the neighborhood of ninety miles is in the Dominion of Canada.

FRANK G. CARPENTER.

OFFICE OF THE AMERICAN CONSUL AT WHITE HORSE. ELMER J. WHITE AT LEFT AND FRANK G. CARPENTER AT RIGHT.



ROTARY SNOW PLOW. THE WHEEL IN FRONT OF THE ENGINE HAS REVOLVING KNIVES, WHICH CUT THROUGH THE ICE AND SNOW. THE MACHINE CAN HANDLE SNOW TWELVE FEET IN DEPTH.



BUILDING THE RAILROAD. THE MEN ARE TIED WITH ROPES TO KEEP FROM FALLING.

Columbia Hospital Is One of the Most Perfectly Arranged of Its Kind

WHAT It Is Doing for the Women of Washington—New Structure Takes Place of Building Used Since 1872—An Inspection of the Building—The Care of Convalescents. In the Nursery—Where the Cooking and Washing Is Done—Need of a Home for Nurses.

ALL hospital work is gracious, but none more so than that which cares for women and babies, such work, for example, as is done in the Columbia Hospital for Women, at Pennsylvania avenue and 25th street.

This institution is not solely a charitable one. It is a boon to the daughters of wealth, a refuge for the poor and abandoned; and women of every grade between these extremes of poverty and wealth will find there every attention that skill, thought and money can provide.

The social life of the city has left the section where the Columbia building stands, and not many now know or recall that this was the site of the old Maynard house, the one-time home of the British minister, and that trade then was far away from these scenes. The property subsequently was acquired by the national government, which provided the funds necessary to alter the old mansion into a more fitting building for the little organization already formed as a hospital for afflicted womankind.

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In 1872 the mansion was occupied as a hospital and was so used until 1915, when the new structure was erected. The present hospital, although not the largest, is one of the most perfectly arranged for its purpose in the country. The building, which is of rough gray brick, with heavy tiled roof, is Spanish in architecture, and while the design, of necessity, does not lend itself to beauty of outline, its fitness to the purpose of the building gives it a charm emphasized by its originality.

The construction of this building was placed by Congress in the hands of Elliott Woods, superintendent of the Capitol building and grounds, who had supervised the erection of the Senate and House office buildings. He called in the assistance of architect and engineer, and in co-operation with the directors has produced a building which is described in these words: "The design shows the main portion of the building a rectangle 176 by 44 feet, running east and west, with Y-shaped wings at each end of the front."

The main building is five stories high, with a basement underneath and a roof garden on top. The wings are two stories lower, and across each of the four ends of the Y-wings are three screened porches, one for each floor.

The whole building is devoted to maternity cases and the diseases of women, and has two divisions, one for each class of case. Each service provides for both free and pay patients and separate quarters for white and colored patients. Besides provision for the service, which includes treatment, nursing and living, a dispensary in the basement has been added.

The first floor is for colored free patients, the second for white free, the third for private patients, while the fourth floor contains the operating and delivery suites, and the fifth the kitchens and dining rooms.

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If one can obtain the privilege of inspecting this building he will, on entering, find himself in a large hall with a central counter, suggesting a simple hotel desk. A uniformed nurse, who presides over the telephone, will accept his credentials, without which he cannot go further, and direct him on his way.

Dr. Skinner, the medical superintendent, will see him in his office, and if the visitor promises to be very good he will let him go almost anywhere, except to the nursery, but that he cannot enter. He may look through a glass panel in the door, but he may not cross the threshold—he might carry germs!

If one is very fortunate a nurse will conduct him through the building. A smooth-running electric elevator—there are three—lifts him to the roof, where a covered pergola keeps off the heat of the sun and leaves the space open to the breezes from all directions. The Potomac lies before, Virginia hills opposite and all Washington below.

Convalescents can be taken there in wheel chairs with little strain to obtain that change of scene which so aids recovery. Descending to the top story he will find himself in the kitchens, where there is every device for preparing, cooking and serving food for the inmates, including the sixty nurses and the maids and orderlies. One sees caldrons which hold soup enough for a company of soldiers and an electric potato peeler which will prepare tubers enough for a regiment. Coffee percolators make and keep hot enough of that precious stimulant to supply a rush hour lunch counter.

One may enter great cold storage rooms where there is never a sign of ice. Pipes running from a tank in the cellar convey brine, chilled by ammonia, in coils about the room, keeping it at a temperature that food can be preserved in the hottest weather. An electric ice cream freezer is a novelty. Windows on three sides make this room as light as a photographer's gallery, and if there be any odor of cooking, it is blown into the outdoors and never reaches the patients below.

On the same floor are two dining rooms, well furnished and equipped the smaller for the superintendents and resident nurses, the larger for the pupil nurses. One little thing is characteristic of the whole organization. Near the dining room is a steam box for the express purpose of keeping warm the food for the girls whose duties keep them from dining with the other nurses. Flowers were on the tables and the rooms were spotless. Mr. Woods selected the furnishings.

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The next floor, if inspected, would no longer be thought of as a gallery of horrors. It contains the operating rooms, with every appliance known to science to save life, to ease pain and relieve poor humanity. A feature of this floor is the rooms where patients from the wards, their trials over, are taken to rest alone for a day or two until, after their excitement has subsided, they are taken down stairs.

If the visitor is really interested, not merely politely, Miss Nurse will show and explain the things he sees, and then take him to the floor below, where are the rooms for the pay patients. Severely simple but very pretty they are, with their bare, tinted walls and polished floors, for there must be no place for dust to lodge. A narrow bed on long legs is the main piece of furniture, and a chair or two, a dresser, a table which will stand right across the bed, nearly complete the equipment. A low couch which rolls under the bed serves, when pulled out, as a sleeping place for the special nurse, who is provided if the case is such as to require one.

Private wards which will accommodate two or four patients are provided for those who wish not to incur the heavier expense of the private room. None of these rooms open upon the porches, but all corridors lead to one of these resting places for convalescents. The wards are so arranged that a nurse sits in an angle where, without being in the room, she may by means of inside windows have supervision of her ward.

Following Dr. Skinner's injunction, Miss Nurse will keep the visitor out of the nursery. Perhaps, on hearing the noise one will be thankful, but do not miss the chance to look in and see the basket cradles hung in rows along the side wall. It gives one a singular impression to see those little mites of humanity cradled in their baskets in a great building, attended by trained nurses, treated aseptically by gynecologists.

Each baby, boys as well as girls, wears a bracelet—a tag—the very first thing they put upon it, so that there is no danger of getting "those babies wondrous mixed."

Returned to the first floor the visitor loses Miss Nurse, but Engineer McAuliffe takes him in charge and shows the basement, where the chief laundress has charge of the big room in which, with extractors, mangles, presses, dryers and irons, she cleans sometimes 2,000 pieces a day. There are seen the great boilers which in cold weather supply heat to the hundreds of radiators, and the tanks which automatically by thermostat keep an abundant supply of water at a temperature of 180 degrees. There the brine is sent up to the cold storage rooms on the fifth floor, and the switchboards that regulate the electric currents which are supplied by the public service company. He will tell that he has to look after 200 faucets and 2,000 valves.

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Then the engineer will take the visitor to the roof and show him how the foul air is sucked from the operating rooms and air, cooled and washed, driven in to take its place. By the time McAuliffe has shown all his mechanical charges one will wonder how he bears them, until he takes a good look at McAuliffe.

The hospital was organized in 1862 under the inspiration of Dr. J. Harry Thompson, a well known physician of Washington, and it began operations in a little old building at 14th street and Massachusetts avenue, from which it moved into the Maynard building.

While the property is owned by the government, which also bears a portion of its annual maintenance expense, the raising of the rest of the money and the management fall upon its officers. Dr. Wiley, Surgeon General Braisted, U. S. N., and Messrs. Enoch White, E. Southard Parker and John D. McChesney, and a board of twenty-four directors. Among the latter are Surgeon General Blue, Senator Gallinger, Representatives Charles C. Carlin and Martin D. Foster, Surgeon General Gorgas and Bishop Harding. Thirty-six women prominent in such work form a board of visitors.

No hospital, except a very few which have been enormously endowed, can meet its expenses from its income. It must practice preparedness—that is, it must always be ready to run at its full capacity. It will not do to wait until an instrument is needed before buying it; it must be at hand when the emergency arises. Pupil nurses must be trained, gotten ready for the contest. That hospital is culpable which allows an underfed, an overworked or an ill-housed and unhappy nurse, however willing and conscientious, to take charge of a patient or a ward.

The nurses of Columbia Hospital are fortunate in some but not in all respects. They have an excellent course of theoretical training; they are not, as in an inferior class of institutions of this sort, compelled to do the scrub work of the place, which is here done by workers and orderlies, but since the work is so specialized they have not the opportunity for a broad course in practical nursing. They are well fed and well treated, but certainly they need a suitable nurses' home. They require comfort and the opportunity for relaxation quite as much as any other human beings, and they must have these if the hospital is to get full efficiency from them. That is a plain business proposition.

All this plant and preparation must be kept up; it is as necessary for the wealthy as for the unfortunate. Its maintenance places upon the directors and visitors a heavy burden.

The hospital has a wonderful staff, but any physician or surgeon of good standing has all the privileges of the place and may take any of his patients there for treatment.

Some persons, not unkindly at heart, take the cold-blooded position that hospitals are an evil; that from their standpoint it is better that the riff-raff, the wastage which drifts to the wards, should, following nature's law, be permitted to wear itself out and die.

One should hear the views of Surgeon General Braisted on that subject:

"It is not," said he, "the privilege of any one to pass judgment upon an inmate of any hospital, for the general proposition is not true. It most certainly does not apply to a place like the Columbia; and should not to any, even where the most vicious people are taken for treatment. Half the time depravity is the result of sick bodies, almost always of ignorance. No, they must not die, but be given a chance to live and be shown in the hospitals how to live decently.

"I hope the time will come when the care of the sick will be of such concern to the public that there will be hospitals for all, where every one who is ill may go for rest and care and real restoration.

"In Columbia we handle only special cases, and who could bear to deprive a mother and a baby of anything which will protect both and make them better and stronger? For care in such times there is no place like a good modern hospital."

DINNER TIME IN NURSERY AT COLUMBIA HOSPITAL FOR WOMEN.

THE CULTIVATION OF MEDICINAL PLANTS

THE herb garden is no new thing, and in the centuries gone the herbalists were regarded as men of considerable distinction, and were in numerous instances men of considerable learning, as knowledge of the sciences was measured in those remote times. The herbalist was botanist, pharmacist and physician, raising his own herbs, making from them his own medicines and administering them to his own patients. A number of the gardens of these old herbalists are historic, a few of them have been preserved in Europe, and in more than one instance a great botanical garden has been developed out of what was once an herbalist's garden.

But the herbalist who raised his own plants passed into eclipse. Medicine-making and the practice of medicine became separate occupations. The world's demand for medicines increased to such proportions that the herb garden could not nearly supply it. Recourse was had to wild medicinal herbs, and the gathering and curing of these plants give work to thousands of men, women and children, and is a large industry which is scattered throughout the world.

Of late there is a tendency to return to the herb garden, or it would be better now to call it herb plantation or herb farm. No longer is it considered meet and proper that in one garden should be gathered all the plants that are called for in the treatment of human ills. The knowledge of medicine and medicinal plants has been very much extended within the last century, or the last two centuries, and today plant life from all climates and all soils is drawn on to meet the demand. Because of this, herb growers specialize, raising particular herbs which flourish in that particular climate and soil.

As yet the great bulk of weeds and other plants, barks and seeds called for in materia medica are of wild growth, but men who send large supplies of these to the chemical manufacturers who need them are slowly but gradually turning to the cultivation of the plants.

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Naturally they are turning first to the plants which are most difficult to obtain in the wild state and which bring the highest prices. One of these is the deadly nightshade, from which atropine is made. It is said that this drug has very much increased in price of late, but that there is still a plentiful stock of the plants growing wild in this country. However, men are undertaking its cultivation. Another name for "deadly nightshade" is "atropa belladonna." The particular property it possesses when applied to the eye of causing dilation of the pupil was known to Pliny nearly 2,000 years ago, and if Matthiolus is to be trusted, the drug came to be known as belladonna from the fact that in the seventeenth century it was used by Venetian women as an aid to what the flippant would refer to as "eye work."

The plant is partial to lime-bearing soils; it is not a quick grower, and as it must be raised from seed, which is none too plentiful, growing it is not a gold mine.

Foxglove, a rather common wild plant, is another of the herbs which are in demand. A writer has said that one should go into the cultivation of this plant warily, and his caution is in the following words: "The common wild foxglove (Digitalis purpurea), from which digitalis is extracted, is a case in point, for this is not a plant for cultivation by those whose tent is pitched on limy soil; again the garden forms of the foxglove are not so suitable for the herb farmer's purpose as the wild plant, and certain strains of the latter are better than others."

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The aconite plant is widely distributed in its growth, and it is said that because its distribution is so nearly universal that it is hardly worth cultivation.

Oil of chamomile is prepared from Anthemis nobilis, beloved of the old herbalists, and, though it is a native weed, America and British chemists have for years drawn their supplies mainly from the plant farms of Belgium and Saxony. The flowers are harvested in September, and, though in a dull, wet autumn they lose much of their value, the closing of continental supplies seems, it has been said, to make the risks of cultivation worth running, especially as cultivated flowers yield a more uniform extract.

As everybody knows, the dandelion, from which taraxicum is extracted is irrepressible and the wild supply is inexhaustible and easily obtained. Among the many other common herbs which grow in the open fields, the meadows and the woods, are valerian, pennyroyal, marshmallow, horehound, meadow saffron and coltsfoot.

Though an increasing number of persons are embarking in the business of cultivating medicinal herbs, an authority on the subject of drug plants bids them beware. "Just how far," he says, "they are a good investment is a nice point for the adventurer. If a countryman, he has most of them to his hand in quantity; moreover, the demand, though steady, is not great, and the supply may easily be overdone. Indeed, that is the risk in the case of all medicinal plants."

The Height of Man.

THERE is no evidence to show that men have ever had a greater average height than they have now. For a long time there existed in France, near the junction of the Isere and Rhone rivers, a deposit of gigantic bones known as the "Giant's Field." In recent times bones have been exhumed there which were believed to be human, and were said to be those of Teutobodus, the king of the Teutons, who was overcome near the spot by Marius, the Roman general.

The researches of Cuvier, however, proved that these bones, together with all the others exhumed in the same place, were those of the Dinotherium giganteum, an extinct animal of the tapir species, which measured about twenty feet in length.

The myth of a race of giants has its counterpart in those other creatures of the imagination, the pygmies. These fabled people, who were so small that a stalk of grain was a tree to them, which they chopped down with tiny hatchets and brush hooks, were said to inhabit Ethiopia. They were always at war with the cranes, but lived on such excellent terms with the partridges that they were able to harness them into their carriages. They lived at first, according to the fable, in Thrace, but were driven out of Europe by the cranes and took refuge in Ethiopia.

It is now commonly supposed that the pygmies were nothing more or less than monkeys of small size, like marmosets.

The stories of the pygmies go with the fables of the giants. The men of ancient times were of the same, or nearly the same, height as those of the present day. The doors of ancient houses, ancient armor, the Egyptian mummies, as well as the fossil bones of men, prove that there has been little or no variation.

Among famous tall men was the Roman Emperor Maximin, whose stature was seven and three-quarters feet. Maximin was a young barbarian, the son of a Gothic father, who first attracted the attention of the Romans by overcoming sixteen of the strongest men, one after another, in a wrestling contest, and, having been made a centurion, he fought and intrigued his way to the imperial throne.

The normal stature of men and women ranges between five feet and six feet four inches.